

commanding sublimity, of which the natural effect is to be, a complacency, or an elation, in the idea of such a death as a Christian cannot die. But how would he feel while giving such a warning? Might it not be said to him, And are *you* then willing to die otherwise than as a Christian? If you are, you virtually pronounce Christianity an imposture, and, to be consistent, should avow the rejection. If you are not, how can you endeavour to seduce your readers into an enthusiastic admiration of such a death as you wish may now be yours? How can you endeavour to infect your reader with sentiments which you could not hear him utter in his last hours without alarm for the state of his mind? Is it *necessary* to the pathos and sublimity of poetry, to introduce characters which cannot be justly represented without falsifying our view of the most serious of all subjects? If this *be* necessary, it would be better that poetry with all its charms were exploded, than that the revelation of God should be frustrated in the great object and demand of fixing its own ideas of death, clearly and alone, in the minds of beings whose manner of preparing for it is of infinite consequence. But there is no such dilemma; since many examples could be found, and an unlimited number may with rational probability be imagined, of Christian greatness in death. Are not then the preference of examples adverse to Christianity, and that temper of the poet's mind which is in such full sympathy with them, empowering him to personate them with such entireness and animation, and to express for them all the appropriate feelings, a worse kind of infidelity, as it is far more injurious, than that of the cold dealer in cavils and quibbles against the gospel? What is the Christian belief of that poet worth, who would not on reflection feel self-reproach for the affecting scene, which may for a while have betrayed some of his readers to regard it as a more dignified thing to depart in the character of Socrates or Cato, than of St. John or a Christian martyr? What would have been thought of the pupil of an apostle, who, after hearing his master describe the spirit of a Christian's departure from the world, in language which he believed to be of conclusive authority, and which asserted or clearly implied that this alone was greatness in death, should have taken the first occasion to expatiate with enthusiasm on the closing scene of a philosopher, or on the exit of a stern hero, that, acknow-